

The Status Report

April 2009 | Volume 5, Issue 9

Charles F. Hurley Building, 19 Staniford St., 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02114
Web: www.mass.gov/women Phone: 617-626-6520 E-Mail: mcsw@state.ma.us



MCSW Inaugurates Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women



Top L-R: MCSW Chair Greer Swiston, BCCSW Commissioner Micaila Britto, UMASS-Dartmouth Chancellor Dr. Jean F. MacCormack, BCCSW Commissioners Ellen Heffernan-Dugan, Carolann McCarron, Representative Patricia Haddad, Representative Bill Bowles, MCSW Commissioner Ruth Bramson
Bottom L-R: BCCSW Commissioners Jean Cotter Fox, Gail Fortes, Denise Hoyt, Juli Parker

On the last day of Women's History Month, the MCSW celebrated the inauguration of the **Bristol County Commission on the Status of Women** with nine extraordinary women tasked with gathering information and strategizing on issues of importance to those living and working in Bristol County. Though the enabling legislation was signed in June of 2008, a regional council had been already hard at work, meeting regularly and identifying priorities specific to the Bristol County region.

Massachusetts is home to many accomplished women who dedicate time, expertise and other resources to city and county women's commissions, local regional councils, organizations and events aimed at ensuring that women's needs are voiced, heard and responded to. The MCSW as the state commission plays a role in convening and encouraging county-based councils to pursue legislation transforming a regional network into a formal, legislatively established commission that can both support the work of the state commission and develop locally relevant solutions. While the state commission maintains an ongoing role providing support and also functions as the appointing authority, the county Commissioners know their communities

best. A strong network of established county commissions allows for a unified voice and better opportunities for mobilizing statewide.

Along with the Bristol County Commission, the MCSW has assisted in establishing a **Berkshire County Commission** and a **Cape & Islands Commission**.

Inside This Issue

Executive Director Corner	2
Unsung Heroines Announced	3
Equal Pay Day	4
Commonwealth Commissions Update	4
Upcoming Events	5



UMass-Dartmouth Chancellor Dr. Jean F. MacCormack addresses attendees at the BCCSW's Inaugural Event on March 31st.

Executive Director Corner

Got Equity?

Each year, women work into the month of April to earn as much as their male counterparts did the previous year. U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis citing U.S. Census Bureau figures remarked that women still make 77 cents for every \$1 dollar earned by men.

Working women want equal pay — and legislators are listening. In Congress and state legislatures, initiatives are being considered that secure equal pay enforcement and strengthen protections against wage discrimination. While the wage gap is closing it will take women in Massachusetts until the year 2050 to achieve equity. The recent attention on mega bonuses flowing to corporate executives has provoked a wave of anxiety and anger making it hard to talk about wage equity without asking:



Kira Dunn, Executive Director

Is this justice you can take to the bank?

With access to quality child care a central barrier facing working women, is “shovel ready” what we really need? How about “diaper ready”?

Certainly the stimulus resources taking the Ready To Go approach will get many people back to work. It's a woman's need for other ingredients in her life related to the job, such as child care and transportation, to be in place that we must continue to persuade legislators is equally as important to fund. A shovel ready position wont work if there's no after school program.

While many women and men are on a financial and emotional roller coaster there is one thing we know for sure: doing nothing won't bring the change we need.

MCSW has signed on to support several important pieces of legislation designed to address pay equity and economic security being considered in the current session. Leading up to Equal Pay Day, April 28th, we will be sending an Action Alert to all of our Members to share current economic forecasting information and a calendar of related event activities around the Commonwealth. Legislators will receive an Action Alert highlighting pay equity and related research bills that address economic justice.


What you can do: Join the Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equity (<http://www.mass.gov/women/payequity.htm>), get more information (<http://un.org/womenwatch>), attend a WAGE seminar (www.wageproject.org), call or write and ask your legislators which pay equity bills they plan to support, and on April 28th, wear red as a symbol of how far women are "in the red" with their pay.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kira Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kira Dunn, Executive Director

MCSW Announces Unsung Heroines of 2009



*They don't make the news...
they make the difference.*

The MCSW proudly announces the Unsung Heroines of 2009. These women come from cities and towns across the Commonwealth and each will be recognized for their outstanding contributions to their organizations and communities in a ceremony on Wednesday, May 13, 2008 from 1-4 p.m., at the State House in Boston.

"Our Unsung Heroines are women who don't make the news, but make the difference," said Kira Dunn, MCSW Executive Director. "They are women who use their time and talent to show us the meaning of the saying 'Be the change you want to see in the world'."

The ceremony will include a program led by Mistress of Ceremonies, NewsCenter 5's Liz Brunner, an introduction of

each of the Heroines, and a *Just Desserts* reception featuring pastries from some of the best pastry chefs in Massachusetts.

A complete list of this year's Heroines can be found online at www.mass.gov/women. These Unsung Heroines were carefully selected from nearly 400 nominations.

Honorees will be featured in an event program available to all in attendance. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. For more information please visit www.mass.gov/women or contact the MCSW at 617-626-6520 or mcsw@state.ma.us.

This event would not be possible without the support of the following: Verizon, Bank of America, Covidien, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Teresa & H. John Heinz Charitable Fund, Bagel Alley of Nashua, Corbett & Lalli Communications, Elizabeth & William Houlihan, and YWCA Central Massachusetts. Pastries for the *Just Desserts* reception will be generously provided by Hamersley's Bistro, Jacqueline's Gourmet Pastries, and Whole Foods.

MCSW Attends Workplace Domestic Violence Training

Domestic violence becomes a workplace issue when a victim leaves home to go to work. For many, the workplace is where a victim spends a significant amount of time everyday and also is a place where a perpetrator knows how to reach and find her. The violence experienced at home follows her to work making a once "domestic" matter public. Threatening phone calls and visits from perpetrators at a workplace increases visibility of the violence and puts co-workers all at risk. Most significantly, 74% of employed battered women surveyed report being harassed by their batterer at work.

MCSW Commissioners and staff attended a training offered by Employers Against Domestic Violence to learn more about emerging best practice strategies for domestic violence prevention and intervention by employers. All agreed that employers can make a difference and that a workplace response to domestic violence can positively change a woman's life. National studies presented that day demonstrate that when an employer mandates DV awareness trainings in a workplace or incorporates DV awareness into new employee orientation, employee request for counseling and intervention services increase by 14%. Other key strategies presented included creating multi-disciplinary response teams, ensuring comprehensive training to managers on deploying existing policy, ensuring safety for victims at work and ensuring confidentiality when a victim does come forward requesting assistance.

Even more basic, and a deceptively simple strategy, includes talking with victims who are your colleagues. By ignoring them, pretending it doesn't happen to people who work with you, or assuming they don't want to talk about it can further isolate a victim and reinforce the notion that it's a private matter to be dealt with exclusively at home.

First Lady Diane Patrick has become the Commonwealth's premier spokesperson encouraging everyone to deploy this simple strategy. Mrs. Patrick taped a Public Service Announcement entitled "Talk: It could save someone's life" which can be viewed on the MCSW 'Resources' page (online resources and downloadable brochures) or by clicking here: <http://www.mass.gov/women/resources/hotlines.htm>.

Equal Pay Day is April 28th

Equal Pay Day, Tuesday, April 28th highlights the average wage gap between men and women. It falls on a Tuesday because that is the day when women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous week.

What You Can Do to Recognize Equal Pay Day:

- **Wear RED on Equal Pay Day** to symbolize how far women and minorities are "in the red" with their pay.
- Hold an Equal Pay Day bake sale. Have men pay 100 percent while charging women only 77 percent of the price for the baked goods.
- Hold an "Unhappy Hour" to recognize the hard working women who deserve equal pay and offer reduced drink prices for women!
- **Blog for Fair Pay!** Participate with the National Women's Law Center and many other participating organizations by blogging, tweeting, and posting on Facebook about this important issue!
- Call or write to your state representative and ask them to support the "Paycheck Fairness Act" and the "Fair Pay Act".

American Fact Finder. US Census Bureau. http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

Commissions Across the Commonwealth

Brookline Commission for Women

On Wednesday, March 25th, the **Brookline Commission for Women** hosted the 17th Annual Women Who Inspire Us Awards Ceremony. This event is held annually in March in celebration of National Women's History Month. An essay contest is run in the elementary schools for 6th, 7th and 8th graders who write an essay about a woman that inspires them. The students must write about a woman they know and who is living. This year the BCW received nearly 200 submissions. Nine winners were selected and honored at the event, along with the woman who inspired their essay. The BCW also honored the 2009 Brookline Woman of the Year at the evening's ceremony. This year, Hsiu-Lan Chang was named the Brookline Woman of the Year for her work as a community organizer, activist and advocate. Hsiu-Lan is also a small business owner of a busy framing store and mother of two sons. The event drew 125 attendees who celebrated the many great women in the Brookline community who are doing extraordinary work and serving as such inspirations to the community's youth. This event was supported through a grant from the Brookline Community Foundation.

Cambridge Women's Commission

On Monday, March 23, Cambridge's Mayor E. Denise Simmons hosted a reception to honor the work of the Cambridge Women's Commission followed by a special presentation to City Council. Executive Director Kimberly Sansoucy presented specific recommendations in five categories - economic issues, older women, women's health, women's safety and young women/girls - intended to shape and inform policy for women and girls in Cambridge. Developed by community leaders who attended the Women's Data Workshop, these recommendations were crafted after lengthy review and analysis of gender-based data collected in the *Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Cambridge*. For more information, please call the Cambridge Women's Commission at (617) 349-4697.

Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women

For the last year and a half, the BCCSW, has been focused on teen pregnancy prevention, and working to build awareness within the whole community, including businesses, schools, public health and the general public, regarding the impact of teen pregnancy in the community. Working with a consultant, BCCSW has held meetings with individuals from multiple fields to broaden the understanding of the impact and to discuss positive approaches to address the issue.

The BCCSW has also begun to focus on the issue of Domestic Violence, in particular the alarming increase in domestic violence deaths in recent years. The BCCSW will be hosting a public information session regarding Domestic Violence, special guests will be invited from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, regional service providers and local legislators.

Take Action. Get Educated. Get Involved.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in organizations focusing on women's issues across the Commonwealth you can start by attending any one of the number of events and meetings taking place in the coming weeks.

Sunday, April 5 (10:00 a.m.): Boston Area Rape Crisis Center Fourth Annual Walk for Change

Location: Canal Park at CambridgeSide Galleria (Cambridge)

Details: This event is held to both kick off Sexual Assault Awareness Month and to raise much needed funds for the free services that BARCC offers to sexual assault victims, families and the community. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m. and the Walk begins at 11 a.m. The route is a 5k loop around the Charles River. The BARCC's goal this year is 1,000 walkers and \$100,000 raised! Walkers can register online at www.firstgiving.com/barcc or they can visit (www.barcc.org) for paper registration materials. Registration is \$20 to pre-register and \$30 day-of.

Monday, April 6 (7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.): The Women's Economic Summit - Reflection, Celebration, Action

Location: UMASS-Lowell, North Campus - Cumnock Hall (One University Avenue, Lowell)

Details: Join the Merrimack Valley Venture Forum for a unique event designed to provide focus of where women have been, where we are now, and the new realities of women in the world of tomorrow. Explore the evolution of women in the business and economic worlds - from invisible - to visible - to the actual control of wealth. Chart the progress and influence women have on the world today, and illuminate the economic power of women of the future. The Women's Economic Summit is the first of its kind, targeting an educated, influential audience of businesswomen and addressing the incredible impact of women on today's economics. Registration is \$200 and includes breakfast, lunch and afterhours hors d'oeuvres. For more information visit <http://summit.mvfvf.org>.

Monday, April 13 (9:00 a.m.): Jane Doe Inc. Legislative Advocacy Day

Location: Massachusetts State House (Boston)

Details: Join Jane Doe Inc. and its supporters in advocating for legislation relating to sexual assault and domestic violence. Last year over 150 survivors and advocates rallied at the State House in a united cause to speak out against sexual assault and domestic violence and for increased funding for prevention, education and support services. For more information visit www.janedoe.org.

Tuesday, April 14 (6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.): Women Who Launch - Discussion on Mentoring and Networking Event

Location: Inner Space Yoga Studio (17 Station Street, Brookline Village)

Details: The Brookline Commission for Women, in collaboration with the Brookline Chamber of Commerce and the Brookline Economic Development, is hosting the 3rd *Women Who Launch - Discussion on Mentoring and Networking Event*. *Women Who Launch* is a series of programming aimed at current and future female entrepreneurs. This event is a great opportunity for current and prospective female entrepreneurs to network and enjoy delicious refreshments from Kookoo Cafe and learn about the importance and benefits of mentoring for women! For more information please e-mail BCW@town.brookline.ma.us.

Saturday, April 25 (9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.): The Money Conference - Rebounding from a Recession

Location: Western New England College (1215 Wilbraham Road, Springfield)

Details: Join the YWCA and Treasurer Tim Cahill for a free conference focusing on money management, planning for college, life after college, retirement, and investment strategies for all ages, racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, and levels of financial knowledge. Space is limited so register today at www.themoneyconference.com.

Monday, May 4 (5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.): Emerge Massachusetts Annual Awards - Celebrating Women in Politics

Location: Bingham McCutchen LLP (One Federal Street, Boston)

Details: An event honoring Senate President Therese Murray and featuring guest speaker Barbara Lee. Tickets and sponsorships range from \$50-\$1,000. To RSVP please email rsvp@emergema.org or call 617.367.4930 ext. 3. Space is limited so RSVP today. For more information please visit www.emergema.org.

Wednesday, May 13 (1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.): Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts

Location: Massachusetts State House (Boston)

Details: The MCSW will honor Unsung Heroines from across the Commonwealth who *don't make the news, but make the difference*. For more details, please visit www.mass.gov/women/unsungheroines.htm.

For even more upcoming events please visit our online calendar at www.mass.gov/women/calendar/upcoming.htm.

Do you have an event you would like to see on this list in an upcoming issue of The Status Report? E-mail the details to Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us and we will do our best to include your event in our next issue and/or on the MCSW's website calendar.

Commission Officers & Members

Greer Tan Swiston, Chair, Newton
Pam Malumphy, Vice Chair, Pittsfield
Elizabeth H. Houlihan, Treasurer, Falmouth
Donna Finneran, Secretary, Mattapan

Ruth Bramson, Dover
Linda Cavaoli, Worcester
Chris Chanyasulkit, Brookline
Helen Corbett, Middleton
Marisa DeFranco, Middleton
Deborah DiMasi, Boston
Stacy Dixon, Randolph
Stephanie Everett, Mattapan
Marianne Fleckner, Westford
Catherine Greene, Brighton
Elizabeth Hart, Malden
Lucy Hartry, Florence
Joanne Fitzgerald McCrea, Salem
Angela Menino, Hyde Park
Ruth Nemzoff, West Newton

Commission Staff

Kira Dunn, Executive Director
Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator
Kim Sebastiao, Program Coordinator
Darlene Kelter, Administrative Assistant

Commission Interns & Volunteers

Rebekah Fiehn, *UMASS-Boston: Program for Women
in Politics & Public Policy*
Sarah Lamm, *Northeastern University*
Eglantina Malaj, *Salem State College*
Priscilla Nyahwa, *UMASS-Boston*
Jessica Pereira, *Fitchburg State College*
Nelly Rocha, *Volunteer*



19 Staniford St., 6th FL
Boston, MA 02114

Phone:

617.626.6520

Fax:

617.626.6530

E-Mail:

mcsw@state.ma.us

Web site:

www.mass.gov/women

**Do you have questions or comments about this
newsletter? If so, please contact**

MCSW@state.ma.us

Member of the

